

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

AGENDA TITLE: Prioritization of Regional Services to Support the Regional Growth Strategy

PRESENTED BY: Tom Hauger, City of Seattle, and Michael Hubner, Suburban Cities Association

SUMMARY

At the last Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) meeting, on March 17, 2010, members asked staff to address three questions regarding the allocation of regional service delivery. The three specific issue areas staff was requested to address were: prioritizing investments in regional roads, financing transit improvements, and identifying the relationship of the work of the GMPC to that of the Regional Transit Task Force (RTTF.) The Interjurisdictional Team (IJT) has prepared responses to each of the questions and formulated a recommendation that the GMPC proceed with the approved CPP Update Phase I work plan including action on revised draft policy language addressing regional services allocation.

BACKGROUND

On March 17, 2010 IJT staff presented to the GMPC the following three Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) amended to address the allocation of regional service as directed by GMPC:

- FW-18** The land use pattern shall be supported by a balanced transportation system, which provides for a variety of mobility options. ~~This system shall be cooperatively planned, financed, and constructed. Mobility options shall include~~ including 1) a high-capacity transit system which links the Urban Centers; and is supported by an extensive high-occupancy vehicle system, local community transit system for 2) a system of bus and other transit modes that links Centers, provides circulation within the Centers, and links to the non-center Urban Areas; 3) a high-occupancy vehicle system linking Urban Centers; and 4) non-motorized travel options.
- FW-19** ~~All jurisdictions in the County, in cooperation with METRO, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, The County and cities should work with the Puget Sound Regional Council, and the State, and other relevant agencies to~~ shall develop a balanced transportation system that enhances regional mobility and reinforces ~~and coordinated financing strategies and land use~~

~~plan which implement regional mobility and reinforce the Countywide vision for managing growth.~~ The Vision 2020~~40~~ Regional Growth Strategies shall be recognized as the framework for creating a regional system of Centers linked by high-capacity transit and an interconnected system of freeway high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and supported by a ~~transit~~ system of bus and other transit options.

T-14 ~~METRO should develop transit level of service standards which provide the County and cities with realistic service expectations to support adopted land uses and desired growth management objectives. These standards should consider that route spacing and frequency standards are necessary for differing service conditions including:~~

- ~~a. Service between designated Centers served by high-capacity transit;~~
- ~~b. Service between designated Centers not served by high-capacity transit; and~~
- ~~c. Service to areas outside Centers.~~

Transit service, throughout the county, in support of countywide growth management objectives, shall be prioritized to 1) areas where existing housing and employment densities support transit ridership and 2) Urban Centers and other areas planned for housing and employment densities that will support transit ridership. Transit providers shall also strive to meet the mobility needs of transit-dependent populations in allocating transit service.

Discussion that followed the presentation of these policies resulted in further direction to staff to address three specific issue areas: prioritizing investments in regional roadways, financing transit improvements, and identifying the relationship of the work of the GMPC with that of the RTTF. Staff has reviewed the issues raised by GMPC members and offers the following analysis and response.

DISCUSSION

This staff report provides further clarification on the issues raised by GMPC membership on March 17, 2010. The following discussion is provided as a staff response to each issue in turn.

Prioritizing Investments in Regional Roads. Mayor McGinn (Seattle) asked how the proposal would address development of roads relative to intended growth areas.

Staff Response: The direction provided by GMPC in 2009 was to develop a policy related to regional services. Based on the context of the 2009 discussion, the staff defined regional services to mean services that are provided by a single entity across the entire county. Since most roads in the county are developed by individual cities, the county or the state, staff did not consider roads in its analysis of regional services.

In addition, a review of existing CPPs indicates that current policies provide clear direction about the circumstances under which roadway improvements should be made. There is an emphasis on making existing facilities more efficient to address congestion, to serve high-occupancy vehicles, and to provide access to planned growth areas. The policies also say that countywide facilities

should implement the countywide vision and land use plans. Existing policies relevant to this discussion include:

T-8 In order to maintain regional mobility, a balanced multi-modal transportation system shall be planned that includes freeway, highway and arterial improvements by making existing roads more efficient. These improvements should help alleviate existing traffic congestion problems, enhance high-occupancy vehicle and transit operations, and provide access to new desired growth areas, as identified in adopted land use plans. General capacity improvements promoting only single-occupant vehicle traffic shall be a lower priority. Transportation plans should consider the following mobility options/needs:

- a) Arterial high-occupancy vehicle treatments;
- b) Driveway access management for principal arterials within the Urban Growth Area; and
- c) Improvements needed for access to Manufacturing and Industrial Centers, marine and air terminals.

FW-21 Infrastructure planning and financing shall be coordinated among jurisdictions to direct and prioritize Countywide facility improvements to implement the Countywide vision and land use plans.

In the context of the discussion about services supporting growth, the current policies appear to provide a clear vision and direction for aligning roads with the growth strategy. Staff concludes that no amendments are necessary at this time, but staff may suggest some language changes or reorganization of these policies as part of the complete update of the CPPs.

Financing Transit Improvements. Councilmember Phillips (King County) expressed concern about the editing of FW-18 that removed this sentence: *“This system shall be cooperatively planned, financed and constructed,”* asserting that support for cooperative financing needs to be retained in the CPPs.

Staff Response: There is existing language throughout the CPPs that addresses this issue. For example, similar language appears in existing policy FW-37 (*emphasis added*).

FW-37 To implement the Countywide Planning Policies, *jurisdictions shall cooperatively identify regional funding sources and establish regional financing strategies by July 1, 1996.* Such strategies shall consider the infrastructure and service needs of Urban Centers, Manufacturing/Industrial Centers, Activity Areas, business/office parks, other activity concentrations, and Rural Areas. Such strategies shall also provide incentives to support the Countywide Planning Policies and should:

- a) Make existing and newly identified funding sources respond in the most flexible way to meet Countywide needs;

- b) Ensure that a balance of services is available Countywide to meet, among others, human service, public safety, open space and recreation, education, and transportation needs; and
- c) Evaluate current revenue and service demands and the potential for more effective coordination of service delivery.

However, recognizing the importance of establishing interjurisdictional coordination around regional transit service planning, staff has revised its earlier recommended changes to FW-19 to restore the concept of cooperative planning and the need to address financing. Revisions to FW-19 are found below under Staff Recommendation on page five.

Identifying the Relationship of GMPC Work with that of the RTTF. Councilmember Sternoff (Kirkland) cautioned against acting on the aforementioned CPP amendments in advance of the recently appointed Regional Transit Task Force (RTTF) work. Chair Constantine requested that staff provide more information regarding the relationship between regional policy amendments being considered by the GMPC and recommendations that will be made by the newly formed RTTF.

Staff Response: The GMPC and RTTF are engaging in discussions regarding the allocation of regional services. Following are summaries about the scopes of work and milestones within each forum.

GMPC: Under the approved GMPC work plan, the GMPC is scheduled to take action on amendments to the CPPs to support the regional growth strategy on April 28th, 2010. Staff is presenting revised policy language to GMPC accordingly (as below). Concurrently, staff has begun review of the CPPs' framework policies and anticipates presentation of a revised CPP structure and set of framework policies for GMPC consideration in June.

RTTF: The 2010-2011 biennial budget for Metro Transit includes the following expenditure restriction that provides direction to the RTTF, including:

“The charge to the task force shall be to develop recommendations by September 2010 that will identify short term and long term objectives for transit service investment, and formulate a service implementation policy implementing those objectives.”

The initial meeting of the RTTF was held on March 30, 2010. No substantive policy discussion took place; the purpose of this meeting was for task force members to meet and to establish operating rules and meeting schedule. The second meeting of the RTTF is scheduled for **April 20, 2010**. The purpose of this meeting will be for senior staff to brief the task force members on the policy and regulatory framework governing Metro Transit. The RTTF is required to present its final report to the King County Executive and King County Council in September, 2010.

King County will take the RTTF recommendation under advisement when formulating the updated Transit Comprehensive Plan and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Public Transit. The Comprehensive Plan is the long-range, policy-setting document while the Strategic Plan is the functional or implementation plan. Both plans will be transmitted by the King County Executive

to the King County Council by the end of 2010. It is expected that the Regional Transit Committee will lead the review of the plans at the council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The GMPC establishes the policy framework for guiding growth and development in King County through the establishment of the CPPs and for implementing the policies and actions of Vision 2040. This policy framework is intended to guide decisions by all governments in the county as they plan for accommodating and serving growth. The GMPC is also responsible for describing appropriate mechanisms that government can use to promote the desired development pattern through the CPPs. The RTTF was recently convened to specifically address the objectives of King County Metro transit service. Staff has identified two options for moving forward to ensure a coordinated and deliberate approach to addressing regional service delivery:

- (a) Proceed with the approved GMPC work plan to include action on draft policy language addressing regional service allocation. This option has the benefit of providing coordinated local government input to the work of the RTTF. It articulates the framework by which transit services can best serve the regional growth strategy and provides valuable information to the RTTF as it develops its recommendations for King County Council deliberation.
- (b) Defer GMPC action on CPP amendments to support the regional growth strategy until after the RTTF completes its deliberations. This option would put the policy direction under the purview of the RTTF. Without a definitive policy statement from GMPC, it is not clear how the RTTF would take account of the longstanding and approved vision for the physical future of the county.

Staff recommends option (a) and presents the following draft policy language for consideration by the GMPC. The staff recommendation that was originally presented to GMPC on March 17 has been revised to 1) restore a reference to coordination of transit system financing; 2) clarify that the priorities listed in proposed policy T-14 are not listed in any particular order; and 3) clarify how transit service relates to current and future ridership demand as well as the need to provide a basic level of transit service coverage to the urban areas of the county. *(Please note that the highlighted portions indicate revisions from the policies as presented to GMPC on March 17th.)*

FW-18 The land use pattern shall be supported by a balanced transportation system, which provides for a variety of mobility options. ~~This system shall be cooperatively planned, financed, and constructed. Mobility options shall include~~ including 1) a high-capacity transit system which links the Urban Centers; and is supported by an extensive high-occupancy vehicle system, local community transit system for 2) a system of bus and other transit modes that links Centers, provides circulation within the Centers, and links to the non-center Urban Areas; 3) a high-occupancy vehicle system linking Urban Centers; and 4) non-motorized travel options.

FW-19 ~~All jurisdictions in the County, in cooperation with METRO, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, The County and cities should work~~ cooperatively with the Puget Sound Regional Council, and the State, and

other relevant agencies to shall finance and develop a balanced transportation system that enhances regional mobility and reinforces ~~and coordinated financing strategies and land use plan which implement regional mobility and reinforce the Countywide vision for managing growth.~~ The Vision 2020⁴⁰ Regional Growth Strategy shall be recognized as the framework for creating a regional system of Centers linked by high-capacity transit and an interconnected system of freeway high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and supported by a ~~transit~~ system of bus and other transit options.

- T-14** ~~METRO should develop transit level-of-service standards which provide the County and cities with realistic service expectations to support adopted land uses and desired growth management objectives. These standards should consider that route spacing and frequency standards are necessary for differing service conditions including:~~
- ~~a. Service between designated Centers served by high-capacity transit;~~
 - ~~b. Service between designated Centers not served by high-capacity transit;~~
~~and~~
 - ~~c. Service to areas outside Centers.~~ In support of countywide growth management objectives, transit service throughout the county, shall be prioritized to areas where existing housing and employment densities support transit ridership and to Urban Centers and other areas planned for housing and employment densities that will support transit ridership. Transit providers shall also strive to meet the mobility needs of transit-dependent populations in allocating transit service and to provide at least a basic level of service to all urban areas of the county.